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**THE INVASION OF  
SOUTHERN FRANCE  
OPERATION DRAGOON**

**FOR INSTRUCTIONAL USE ONLY**

**1949 - 1950**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### SECTION 1

##### GENERAL BACKGROUND

The invasion of Southern FRANCE, Operation DRAGOON, was characterized by an "on again - off again" attitude at the highest political levels. Prime Minister Churchill had always favored an invasion of the BALKANS, to be followed by a sweep up the DANUBIAN Plain into the heart of GERMANY, even before the capture of SICILY or the invasion of ITALY. President Roosevelt, however, in agreement with his military advisors, had always preferred what he considered a more direct line of attack across the Channel, through FRANCE, into the heart of GERMANY. In August of 1943, the Combined Chiefs of Staff meeting with the President and the Prime Minister in the Quebec (QUADRANT) Conference conceived of the Operation against Southern FRANCE (then designated Operation ANVIL), "—in order to create a diversion in connection with Operation OVERLORD (NEPTUNE)—". At the CAIRO-TEHERAN (SEXTANT) Conference, in November and December of 1943, the President and the Prime Minister assured Marshal Stalin that the opening of a major second front in EUROPE would be made before the summer of 1944. Studies indicated a critical shortage of landing craft would prevent a successful invasion before that date. It was decided at that conference that Operation OVERLORD would be delayed until about 1 June 1944 and that the Southern FRANCE Operation, originally to be made simultaneously with OVERLORD, would be postponed until after the NORMANDY assault so that landing craft could be first used in the Channel, then rushed to the MEDITERRANEAN to be employed against Southern FRANCE. The situation in ITALY became stalemated early in 1944 when the ANZIO "end run" to outflank the German positions at CASSINO was securely bottled up by the Germans. It then became obvious that the Germans were planning a last ditch defense to keep the Allies from capturing ROME. By mid-February, it appeared that any assault against Southern FRANCE was an impossibility and several alternate operations were considered — one against GENOA, another close in "end run" on the ITALIAN

West Coast, one at the head of the ADRIATIC Sea on the ITALIAN East Coast and finally one against the ISTRIAN Peninsula for exploitation through the LJUBLJANA Gap into the HUNGARIAN Plain.

## SECTION 2

### THE DECISION

By 7 June 1944 the offensive in ITALY had proceeded so satisfactorily that the Mediterranean Theater Commander, General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, notified the Combined Chiefs of Staff that he could launch a major amphibious assault against Southern FRANCE by 15 August. By 14 June it was clear that a major amphibious assault would be launched, but it was not known whether it would be against Southern FRANCE or in direct support of the Italian Operations. On 17 June it was decided that additional port facilities were needed in FRANCE to permit more rapid build-up of Allied Forces, there being between forty (40) and fifty (50) Divisions waiting in the United States because of lack of entry and maintenance facilities. On 2 July 1944 the Combined Chiefs of Staff approved the operation against Southern FRANCE with a target date of 15 August. The assault strength was established at three (3) divisions with a ten (10) division build-up and sufficient landing craft were to be released from Operation OVERLORD to complete the requirements for this operation.

## CHAPTER II

### PLANNING

#### SECTION 1

#### TOPOGRAPHY

There are three main mountain masses in Southern FRANCE, the PYRENEES along the Spanish border, the ALPS along the Swiss and Italian borders, and the MASSIF CENTRAL between the other two. The CARCASSONE GAP lies along the GARONNE and AUDE Rivers between the PYRENEES and the MASSIF CENTRAL in the southwest and leads to BORDEAUX. The RHONE and SAONE River Valleys lie between the ALPS and the MASSIF CENTRAL, giving a fine approach to the PARIS Plain. The AUDE and RHONE deltas are continuous and provide many fine landing beaches facing the MEDITERRANEAN from the Spanish border to the Italian border. From MARSEILLE to the Spanish border, however, the hinterland delta area is marshy and intersected by small waterways, not favorable to cross-country travel of tracked or wheeled vehicles. East of MARSEILLE, the shore line is increasingly rugged as the border of ITALY is approached. Passage into the interior is facilitated by use of river valleys, such as the ARGENS, which connects with the RHONE Valley. It was in this southeastern coastal area from BAIE de CAVALAIRE to the RADE d' AGAY that the assault beaches were selected for the invasion of Southern FRANCE.

In the target area, ST. RAPHAEL is the largest town, which together with the adjoining town of FREJUS, totals 19,000 population. Two corridors lead out of the ST. RAPHAEL area, one lying south of the 1000-1500 foot MASSIF des MOURES hills leads to TOULON, the other north of the same hills leads to the city of AIX and the DURANCE and RHONE River Valleys. ST. RAPHAEL is a part of the famed RIVIERA resort coast, which has mild weather, steady breezes and good visibility the year round. The soil, although of poor quality for agriculture, will support military vehicles and is generally favorable for military operations. The road net is good, with two main highways in the area, from MARSEILLE to NICE and from FREJUS to AIX (en PROVENCE), and a number of secondary roads suitable for military traffic. A main rail route connects

MARSEILLE and NICE with secondaries to principal towns in the coastal area. The main rail route to the north runs from MARSEILLE through LYONS to PARIS. Only minor ports exist in the target area, at ST. TORPEZ, SAINTE MAXIME and ST. RAPHAEL. Major ports capable of handling all types of shipping are at TOULON and MARSEILLE.

## SECTION 2

### ENEMY SITUATION

#### ENEMY PLAN OF DEFENSE

As a result of ITALY's capitulation in September 1943, the Germans found it necessary to organize the entire MEDITERRANEAN coast of FRANCE for defense. Usual German measures were employed; strip mining along beaches, underwater obstacles and mines, coast defense guns, netting of harbors, infra-red and hydraphone warning devices; all were included. The local ground defenses were not deep, extending inland only as far as necessary to take advantage of terrain. They were built around a system of strong points including pillboxes, blockhouses, and gun emplacements. Roadblocks and anti-tank obstacles were used extensively wherever tracked or wheeled vehicles might be expected, and these were normally covered by fire from infantry weapons and light artillery. Minefields, both anti-tank and anti-personnel, covered invasion beach exits. All landing beaches were protected offshore by minefields and obstacles, and some had anti-tank barriers inshore to protect exits inland. Coast defense guns also protected the beaches.

#### ENEMY DISPOSITIONS

The Nineteenth German Army was charged with the defense of Southern FRANCE. (See Map #1). This Army consisted of eight (8) Infantry Divisions and one (1) Panzer Division, controlled through three (3) Corps Headquarters. None of the divisions was complete in equipment or personnel. It was estimated that two (2) German Divisions would be encountered in the assault area on D-Day, one more by D plus 1, another by D plus 2, and that build-up would follow at the rate of  $\frac{1}{2}$  division per day thereafter to a maximum possible total of  $11\frac{1}{2}$  divisions. It was

expected that German reaction to the invasion would be withdrawal from the assault area, following initial resistance on the beaches, stubborn defense of the major port cities of MARSEILLE and TOULON, and a major defensive stand in the lower RHONE Valley.

By the end of July 1944, enemy naval strength in the MEDITERRANEAN was reduced to a destroyer, a few torpedo and escort boats and approximately ten (10) submarines. Since Allied air forces had crippled construction and repair facilities at MARSEILLE and TOULON, enemy naval craft were considered to have only a nuisance value. They were not considered a serious threat to the invasion.

By the end of July 1944, the German Luftwaffe was also on the decline. Its distribution on air fields in Southern FRANCE, however, gave it the capability of speed of movement and tactical surprise. Its tactical strength of approximately two hundred (200) aircraft in or near the target area offered a threat to the invasion, since it was assumed that this force could be expanded somewhat by withdrawal from other fronts. The majority of these two hundred (200) aircraft immediately available were bombers designed for ship bombardment or reconnaissance. Antishipping operations showed a marked decrease prior to D-Day, indicating that the Luftwaffe had abandoned hope of forestalling an invasion by attacking shipping and were concentrating on reconnaissance to discover the time, place and scale of any projected invasion. Estimates indicated a maximum of approximately 1500 aircraft could be brought to action against the invasion from all parts of FRANCE and ITALY. The NORMANDY action now in progress indicated that few could be spared from Northern FRANCE without detriment to the action there. The general opinion was that on "D" Day and for a short period thereafter, the Luftwaffe would attempt antishipping and beach-head strikes, but that the cost in airplanes would, after three or four days, make the Luftwaffe confine itself to sneak raids and front line strafing sorties. Eventually this would deteriorate into purely reconnaissance flights.

### SECTION 3

#### GROUND FORCE PLANNING

At the request of the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the QUADRANT Conference, a plan had been submitted for a



one division assault on Southern FRANCE as a diversionary attack in conjunction with the NORMANDY assault in the North. The Combined Chiefs of Staff, in reply, directed that plans consider the use of a larger assault force which would pin down more enemy forces. On 23 December 1943, the Joint Planners of the Mediterranean Theater Headquarters prepared and submitted an Outline Plan for the Southern FRANCE invasion, envisioning an assault by two or three divisions, and a build-up to ten divisions, with a provision for exploitation northward. The Navy was to put the ground forces firmly ashore and maintain them there. The Air Force was to reduce the enemy air potential in the area, prevent large scale land reinforcements by cutting lines of communication into the area and render close support to the land forces in the objective area. There was to be an airborne mission to secure beach exits and prominent terrain features to prevent the enemy from reinforcing his beach defenses. In round numbers, the plan envisioned an ultimate ground force strength of 450,000 men and 80,000 vehicles, all in the combat area by D plus 68 if sufficient shipping was available for a three division assault, or by D plus 80 if only enough shipping was available for a two division assault. Actually, the major problem facing all theaters at this time was a shortage of assault shipping, principally LST's. A minimum of ninety-one (91) LST's would be needed for a three division assault, or seventy-six (76) for a two division assault. The Mediterranean Theater had thirty-four (34) LST's left after the requirements for the NORMANDY invasion were met, and these were needed for prosecution of maintenance and air base development projects within the theater. In hopes that the means could be found, the Seventh Army Headquarters was designated as the ground force planners for whatever major operation was to be carried out against Southern FRANCE. The planning group from this Headquarters met in ALGIERS, with Navy planners from Admiral Hewitt's Eighth Fleet Headquarters and General Saville's Twelfth Tactical Air Force Headquarters, early in January, 1944.

After preliminary study of the outline plan, Seventh Army Planners recommended shifting the proposed invasion site eastward to avoid having to approach through a small group of offshore islands. Since decisions were awaited from the Combined Chiefs of Staff on size of assault forces and availability of assault shipping, the planners prepared alternate plans for a one, two or three division

assault. Logistical arrangements were initiated and a tentative troop list prepared. An outline plan for a two division assault was presented to the Theater Commander at the end of April, but vital decisions were still awaited from the Combined Chiefs of Staff. In May, plans A, B and C for Operation RANKIN were prepared in case of partial withdrawal, evacuation or surrender of the Germans. These served to give additional flexibility to the existing plans. It was not until 2 July that a firm decision was made to invade Southern FRANCE on 15 August with an assault force of three divisions and an airborne task force, followed by a build-up to a strength of ten divisions as rapidly as available resources would permit. The American VI Corps Headquarters detached on 15 June from the Fifth Army in ITALY was designated as the assault corps. The 45th, 3rd, 36th Divisions and two French Divisions together with supporting forces were to be the assault units. Planning Headquarters was established in NAPLES where representatives of all participating major headquarters were represented. Training schedules were stepped up and supplies flowed into the Theater in increasing quantities.

Final outline plans were drawn up which established the United States Seventh Army, General Patch commanding, as the command agency for all ground and airborne forces for the assault. This Army was charged with the establishment of a beachhead east of TOULON as a base for the assault, with the capture of TOULON and MARSEILLE, and further to exploit northward toward LYON and VICHY. Earlier terrain studies had provided the information necessary for the selection of beaches in the ST. TROPEZ-ST. RAPHAEL area, about 40 miles east of TOULON and 15 miles west of CANNES. The assault force was the VI Corps (Kodak Force) composed of the American 36th, 45th and 3rd Divisions supported by a Combat Command (Sudre) from the 1st French Armored Division. The assault force was given the mission of reaching a phase line named the "Blue Line" by D plus 2. This enclosed an area with about ten mile radius around the beachhead. The Airborne Task Force (Rugby Force) a provisional Airborne Division composed of British and American forces, was to land on the high ground about ten miles inland from the beachhead. This force would link up with VI Corps elements along the "Blue Line". To protect the landings, the First Special Service Force (Sitka Force) was to capture the offshore islands of PORT CROS and LEVANT during the night of D-1 to D-Day. ROMEO and

ROSIE forces were French Commando and demolition units which were to go into action just prior to D-Day landings, blocking roads, destroying enemy defenses and securing both flanks of the beachhead. The VI Corps was to be passed through by the French II Corps (GARBO Force) consisting of three French Infantry Divisions and one French Armored Division (less the combat command attached to VI Corps) starting D plus 1. Its mission was to be the capture of TOULON and MARSEILLE. It was to be followed by an additional French Corps about D plus 20. A French Army Headquarters subordinate to the United States Seventh Army was to be established to control these Corps.

#### SECTION 4

#### NAVAL PLANNING

Naval planning was carried on concurrently with Ground and Air Force planning. The Commander Eighth Fleet was notified in December 1943 that he would head the naval forces in the invasion of Southern FRANCE. Naval planners awaited the same decisions as the army and air planners. Real planning, training and rehearsals were possible only after the major headquarters were all established in the NAPLES area in early July. Since the German navy was only a nuisance threat to the invasion forces, principal naval interests lay in the procurement of sufficient amphibious vessels, escorts, gunfire and air support units for the invasion, and logistic means for maintenance of the forces. It was prescribed by theater headquarters that the principles of joint command would be followed. This provided that the Naval Task Force Commander would assume command of the entire seaborne expedition until the ground force was firmly established on the far shore. After this, command of ground operations would pass to the ground forces commander. Three principal attack forces were established for control purposes. The Alpha attack force transported the 3rd Infantry Division, the Delta Attack Force transported the 45th Infantry Division, and the Camel Attack Force transported the 36th Infantry Division and the French Armored Combat Command. Each attack force was complete with its own gunfire support group auxiliaries, sweepers and assault ships and craft. Beach names coincided with attack force names from west to east along the coast selected. A general support force consisting

of more gunfire support and sweeper units was reserved for use under Task Force control. The aircraft carrier force under command of Admiral Trowbridge, Royal Navy, completed the Naval Task Force. In all, 880 ships and craft and about 1,370 shipborne landing craft were to engage in the D-Day operations. In addition, 103 merchant ships were scheduled to arrive in the initial convoys (by D plus 1) carrying an additional 170 landing craft for unloading ships anchored off the beachhead. By 25 September (D plus 41) a total of 325,000 personnel, 68,500 vehicles, 490,000 tons of dry stores, and 326,000 barrels of wet cargo were to have been landed in Southern FRANCE. ✕

## SECTION 5

### AIR FORCE PLANNING

Since air force activities during the assault were only a part of the air effort expended against Southern FRANCE, the Air Force Planners of the XII Tactical Air Command of the Twelfth Air Force were busier than those of other services during the indeterminate period from January to June 1944. The air battle was divided into four phases - Prior to D-5, D-5 to 0350 D-Day, 0350 D-Day to H-Hour, and the period thereafter. In the first phase anti-U-boat and anti-Luftwaffe warfare was stepped up, supply lines were interdicted, ports, industry and airfields bombed with increasing intensity. Strikes were spread over the whole area within reach of aircraft so as not to raise German suspicions as to the actual invasion area. Starting D-5, coastal defense batteries and forces and radar stations were bombed and strafed along the whole southern coastline, particularly in four well-scattered coastal areas which might be used for invasion. Pinpoint targets in the beachhead area began receiving attention about H-16, increasing in Phase 3 (0350 hours D-Day) in order to cause maximum destruction to coastal and beach defenses in the target area. Immediately after H-Hour, normal close support missions went into effect. Three missions were assigned i.e., maximum destruction of defenses in the assault area; isolation of the battlefield by destruction of remaining rail and highway bridges leading into the battle area; and attack of enemy dispositions and movements. The final phase

of the air operations was the continued long and short range support of our forces. About 5,000 aircraft were available for the Operation. ✕

3 In addition to the combat aircraft operations planned for the invasion, a Provisional Troop Carrier Air Division was also organized to transport the Airborne Task Force into the battle area. Plans for the movement of this force had to be coordinated with fighter and bomber routes and with naval traffic lanes. The parachute lift was to consist of 396 planeloads, followed by 38 gliderloads. Later in the day, 42 paratroop planeloads followed by 335 gliders were to enter the combat area. Resupply of these forces was to be automatic on D plus 1 by 112 aircraft. Additional supplies were packed and ready, if needed. 4 In retrospect, the troop carrier wing transported 9,000 personnel, 221 vehicles, 213 artillery pieces and 1,100 tons of supplies into the battle area. 5

## SECTION 6

### REPLACEMENTS

Plans provided that the Commanding General, Replacement Command, would furnish support to the operation by supplying personnel through replacement units. These units consisted of a Depot Headquarters and Headquarters Company and four Replacement Battalions. Each Battalion contained a Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment and four Companies. For the initial phase, one replacement Company would give support to, and land with, each United States Division. Each Company would be filled in advance with the appropriate breakdown of replacements. The replacements would be fit for immediate combat duty.

The plan specified that necessary personnel would be requisitioned through Army to Replacement Depot Headquarters on the basis of expected losses covering the period of the first fourteen days. The Replacements would be shipped from the depot on the mainland in organized march groups over the beaches to the Replacement Company supporting the Division. Thereafter requisitions would be submitted covering actual losses only.

The plan also specified that G-1 of Army Headquarters would have a representative attached to the Beach Control Group Headquarters and each shore regiment to coordinate

receipt over the beaches and delivery of replacements to the supporting Replacement Company. All personnel shipped from the depot to units were to be fully equipped including individual arms.

## SECTION 7

### CIVIL AFFAIRS

Seeking the maximum cooperation from the French civilian population and a minimum of interference with operations against the enemy, the Commanding General, Seventh Army, indicated on March 1, 1944 that a civil affairs detachment of 200 officers and 400 enlisted men would be necessary to administer efficiently the area assigned to DRAGOON. A civil affairs organization had been created previously and had trained near ALGIERS. Every effort was made to coordinate the work with the parallel organization in the United Kingdom which was preparing to administer northwestern EUROPE.

Under authority conferred by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, an interim doctrine for civil affairs in Southern FRANCE was issued on 14 May 1944. Within the boundaries of this directive, the Commanding General had supreme responsibility and authority at all times and in all areas to the full extent necessitated by the military situation and in accordance with the rules and customs of war. Military Government would not be established in FRANCE. Civil administration in all areas would normally be controlled by the French themselves. The Commanding General was directed to make every effort to insure that any action required, be taken by the French Authorities. If initial recourse to the French Authorities failed, the Commanding General had authority to take such executive action as the security of the Forces and the success of the military operation required.

The responsibility for civil affairs remained with the Commanding General, but the direction was exercised through the senior Civil Affairs Officer with the title of Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5. Personnel of the Civil Affairs Regiment was largely American and British French Officers were available to handle most of the liaison work with the French local government authorities. This was particularly true with regard to directing the functions of services needed for military operations.

The Seventh Army plan for the civil affairs operations specified that civil affairs staff officers, with transport and field equipment, would be assigned to their respective headquarters sufficiently in advance of D-Day to prepare operational plans in coordination with other sections and services and that they would proceed to the target area with the earliest lift taking headquarters personnel. Civil affairs officers trained for field work with combat troops would be mounted on D-Day and subsequent lifts, with transport and field equipment, preparatory to entering towns as soon as possible after taken. Certain specialist officers, particularly those dealing with civilian supply, finance, public health, public safety, refugees and welfare, would enter liberated towns with the advance of civil affairs officers where required. The plan further specified that an advance party would land with Army Headquarters and reconnoiter a temporary site as Civil Affairs Headquarters and reporting center for civil affairs personnel and transport arriving subsequently.

Probably the most important aspect of the anticipated civil affairs program during the planning was that of civilian food and medical supplies. The situation in Southern FRANCE was understood to be critical; and it was planned to bring in three Liberty ships per convoy from D plus 10 until D plus 40 and thereafter four per convoy until D plus 80. All shipments were to come from the UNITED STATES, except edible oils which had been stock piled in NORTH AFRICA. Distribution was to be made by the French local authorities under supervision of civil affairs officers. In its largest aspect, the function of G-5 "was to assist in furthering the national policies of the UNITED STATES and the UNITED NATIONS as determined by higher directives.

## CHAPTER III

### THE INVASION

#### SECTION 1

##### MOUNTING AND MOVEMENT TO THE ASSAULT

There were four principal port areas selected for the mounting of the forces invading Southern FRANCE. The NAPLES area in ITALY mounted out the three assault divisions, the Special Service Force and the French Commandos. The ORAN area in North AFRICA mounted out the French armored divisions, including the combat command attached to VI Corps for the assault. The "Heel" ports of ITALY - (TARANTO and BRINDISI) loaded out two French infantry divisions, and AJACCIO in CORSICA mounted out the 3rd French Infantry Division of the follow-up French Corps. Assault craft were staged at CORSICA en route to the target to allow stragglers to close, to permit minor repairs and to keep the troops aboard from having too long a continuous voyage in the small craft. In the NAPLES area alone 307 landing craft, 75 combat loaders and merchant ships and 165 escorts were loaded and sailed between 9 and 13 August without any marked confusion. Weather was favorable over the entire route and no unusual incidents occurred. There were no attacks by enemy forces en route and landings began on schedule.

#### SECTION 2

##### THE ASSAULT

✱ Transport and fire support groups arrived in areas on schedule and the landing began at 0800. (See Map #2). An hour of pre-invasion softening up bombardment by fire support groups was carried out. The preliminary tasks of clearing the Islands of LEVANT and PORT CROS and the Peninsula of CAP NEGRE had been accomplished during the night preceding D-Day. Alpha, Delta and Camel Forces proceeded to unload over assigned beaches without difficulty. The air and naval gunfire softening up had been so efficient that practically all coastal defense



positions had been eliminated prior to the assault. Personnel normally manning the positions had withdrawn or deserted and only desultory fire of small caliber weapons was directed against the landing forces. Clearance of offshore obstacles in front of one beach in the Camel area was delayed, but the successes realized at another Camel beach permitted its use by both landing groups without interference with each other. Supplies and equipment were moved ashore much more rapidly than was thought possible. Headquarters VI Corps was able to move ashore on D-Day afternoon and by evening, forces had advanced inland to approximately a six-mile radius from the beachhead. No organized battle line had yet been established. By the end of D-Day a total of 60,000 men, 6,700 vehicles and 18,500 tons of cargo had been discharged over the assault beaches at a cost of five (5) ships or craft sunk and twenty-two (22) damaged. Elements of two (2) German divisions had been engaged and over 2,000 prisoners taken. Contact was established with the Airborne Task Force which had been unusually successful in its missions.

On D plus 1 the Commanding General Seventh Army moved ashore and assumed command of Army Forces. All units thrust forward rapidly against growing enemy opposition on the flanks, with the center still weak and uncoordinated.

On D plus 2 the capture of DRAGUIGNAN by the Airborne Task Force in the center of the area of advance, without meeting enemy resistance, indicated a complete breach of the enemy defensive positions at this point. The capture of a German Corps Commander and his staff at DRAGUIGNAN confirmed this fact. The way was now open for a drive to the RHONE, splitting off the TOULON-MARSEILLE defensive forces from the remainder of the German Nineteenth Army. The French II Corps was already unloading over the assault beaches. The "Blue Line" positions had been reached in most places.

### SECTION 3

#### THE CAPTURE OF MARSEILLE AND TOULON

By D plus 4, units of the French II Corps started to move through VI Corps toward MARSEILLE and TOULON, the objective assigned to the French Forces. En route, the town of HYERS was taken against heavy resistance,

indicating that the Germans would probably try to make a last ditch defense of the area in order to gain time to move their forces out of danger via the RHONE Valley route. By D plus 5, French units, following in the wake of the United States 3rd Division reached the outskirts of TOULON which was prepared for an all around defense. Heavy and light guns were encountered in some numbers, intermingled with strong points, pill Boxes, mine fields and antitank defenses. By 23 August the city was surrounded and under siege. Dominating heights, including some fortified positions, had been captured and it was only a matter of time until the city fell. This occurred on 28 August after bitter street fighting, heavy bombardments by aircraft and shelling by naval forces.

As French units were surrounding TOULON, other forces were advancing on MARSEILLE, elements reaching the suburbs by a mountain route on 22 August. Main roads were covered by road blocks and successive delaying actions were fought by German forces. By 25 August the city was surrounded and contact cut off between the defenders and other German forces in the RHONE Valley. Again, Air and Naval bombardment was employed. On 28 August the German commander capitulated, surrendering his staff and 7,000 prisoners of war. The main body of the French Forces was now free to cross the RHONE and move up the west bank to support the Seventh Army's penetration of FRANCE.

## SECTION 4

### THE DASH UP THE RHONE VALLEY

#### ENEMY SITUATION

Elements of four (4) reinforcing German divisions appeared in the battle area by D plus 3, but their piecemeal commitment to combat and obvious lack of coordinated effort did not serve as a major obstacle to the advance. By D plus 4 the XII Tactical Air Command was operating from bases in FRANCE. By D plus 6 an exploitation Task Force (Butler) had reached the RHONE River at a point more than half way to LYONS. A captured field order of this date ordered a withdrawal of the Nineteenth Army to join Army Group "B" in the BELFORT-VOSGES area. The Germans abandoned a division in each of the cities of TOULON and MARSEILLE and departed hurriedly northward

along the RHONE, attempting to guard flanks and rear with the 11th Panzer Division. Elements of the 36th Division reinforced Task Force Butler at MONTE LIMAR and occupied GRENOBLE to the north. By D plus 8 the enemy was trying to keep escape routes through MONTE LIMAR open and for the next five (5) days fought viciously against Allied Forces in this area. Road blocks had been established north of MONTE LIMAR and this served to pile up German traffic along the route from the south, making it an excellent target for field artillery, armored and tank destroyer units emplaced on surrounding heights. By D plus 13 the Germans had succeeded in extricating part of their forces after breaking through the road blocks with the 11th Panzer Division. Much material was lost, however, including 2,000 trucks, 1,000 horses, 100 artillery pieces and three (3) complete trains including railway guns of major caliber. ✕

Because of our failure to capture and hold MONTE LIMAR remnants of the Nineteenth Army were able to join with German Armies to the north. Continuous rear guard actions ensued up the RHONE Valley. On D plus 18 (3 September) advanced American elements entered LYON.

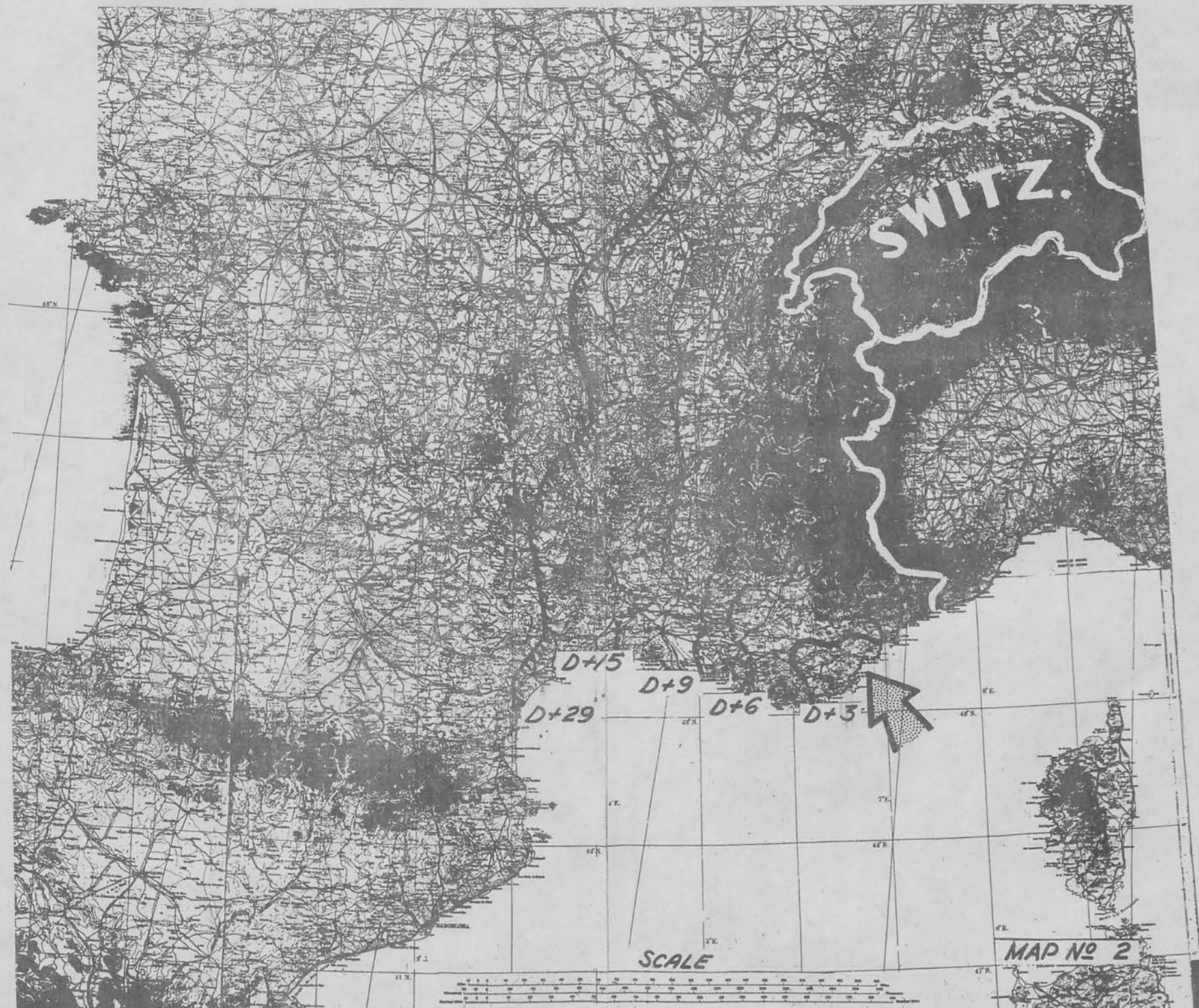
## SECTION 5

### THE JUNCTION OF DRAGOON AND NEPTUNE

By D plus 21 the Germans began to slow their flight on their left flank, which was used as a pivot to swing the remaining units of the Nineteenth Army into a line in extension of the position established by German units facing the Third Army. This served to protect the BELFORT GAP and prevent Allied entry into GERMANY by this means. It also left an escape route open as long as possible to units evacuating the rest of FRANCE so as not to be left for later capture. During the night D plus 26/27 contact was made with units of the Third United States Army to the north by the French units which had captured DIJON on D plus 26 (10 September). A continuous Allied front now extended from the ENGLISH CHANNEL to the MEDITERRANEAN, less than a month after the assault of the coast of Southern FRANCE.



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